

A Short History on Independence Day by Your ACS Officer

My grandfather was born on July 4th and when I was a young child he led me to believe that the Fourth of July celebrations, especially the fireworks, were simply part of the celebration of the momentous occasion of his birth. Eventually I realized that he was not “Honest Paul,” as he liked to call himself, or at least not as regards his birthday. While I still look forward to the Fourth of July as a reason to celebrate my grandfather’s birthday, the majority of Americans feel this day is important for very different reasons. However, while most Americans understand the importance of the day, they do not always know its true origins.



Independence Day, or the Fourth of July, is a holiday commemorating the adoption in 1776 of the Declaration of Independence which officially declared the United States’ independence from the Kingdom of Great Britain. Historically, Americans celebrate the Fourth of July with family gatherings, formal events, fireworks, parades, picnics, carnivals and lots of barbecue.

There are many misconceptions about what actually occurred on the original Fourth. Many people believe it was the day that the Declaration of Independence was written or the day it was signed by Congress. These misconceptions are so pervasive that many of the Founding Fathers actually began to believe that the Declaration was signed on July 4th.

In reality, the legal separation of the American colonies occurred on July 2, 1776, when the Continental Congress voted to approve a resolution of independence. After the vote, Congress began working on a statement explaining their decision. This document was put together by a group of five representatives, with Thomas Jefferson as its principal author. After several days of review and revision, the document was finally approved on July 4th. The actual document was not signed by the majority of delegates until August 2, 1776.

Whether you are celebrating my grandfather’s birthday or the nation’s, the Fourth of July should be treated as an opportunity to spend the day with family and celebrate the freedom and opportunity that came from those fateful and important days long ago in 1776.

~ “Life without liberty is like body without spirit” ~ Khalil Gibran

~ “You have to love a nation that celebrates its independence every July 4, not with a parade of guns, tanks, and soldiers who file by the White House in a show of strength and muscle, but with family picnics where kids throw Frisbees, the potato salad gets iffy, and the flies die from happiness. You may think you have overeaten, but it is patriotism.” ~ Erma Bombeck

~ “I believe in America because we have great dreams – and because we have the opportunity to make those dreams come true.” ~ Wendell L. Wilkie

Inside this Issue:

- A Short History of Independence Day
- Focus on the Embassy
- Summer Travel
- www.travel.state.gov
- Section Hours and Holidays
- The Wild West
- Voter Registration Information
- Voting News

Focus on the Embassy – Commercial Section



The U.S. Commercial Service in Lebanon is a part of a global network of trade specialists dedicated to supporting U.S. commercial interests overseas and helping U.S. companies identify international partners around the world.

The U.S. Commercial Service in Lebanon counsels U.S. companies on market opportunities, regulations and ways of doing business in Lebanon. It responds to various business inquiries related to specific industry sectors and assists U.S. companies in identifying Lebanese representatives for their products and services. It recruits Lebanese delegations to attend trade shows in the U.S. and organizes trade fairs and seminars in Lebanon to promote U.S. products and services.

Below is a listing of a few of the services offered by the U.S. Commercial Service:

***Advocacy**

The U.S. Commercial Service approaches Lebanese government officials on behalf of U.S. firms involved in overseas projects to promote U.S. commercial interest in Lebanon. Advocacy may include visits to government officials, help in arranging meetings with government officials, escorting company representatives to these meetings, assisting U.S. companies in redressing complaints or removing trade barriers, sending letters or making phone calls on behalf of U.S. companies regarding a specific project or opportunity.



For more information, please go to:

<http://www.buyusa.gov/lebanon/en/advocacy.html>

***Gold Key Service (GKS)**



A custom-tailored program designed for U.S. executives planning to visit Lebanon, the **Gold Key Service** has proven to be a highly effective means of promoting sales of U.S. products and services in the Lebanese marketplace.

The **Gold Key Service** offers introductions to potential partners. Depending on the preferences of the client and the length of their visit, the **Gold Key Service** can be offered from one to three business days.

For more information, please go to: <http://www.buyusa.gov/lebanon/en/goldkeyservice.html>



Want to be a **Facebook** Fan of the U.S. Embassy? Just search for "[U.S. Embassy Beirut](#)".

****International Partner Search (IPS)***

The International Partner Search (IPS) identifies up to five prescreened qualified agents, distributors, joint venture partners or other strategic partners that have expressed interest in working with your company.

The International Partner Search (IPS) helps you find potential agents, distributors or other partners without even leaving the U.S. We will contact a large group of potential Lebanese partners using the marketing materials you provide, and then identify companies that are interested and capable of becoming a viable representative for you in Lebanon.



For more information, please go to:

<http://www.buyusa.gov/lebanon/en/internationalpartnersearch.html>

****International Company Profile (ICP)***



The International Company Profile (ICP) helps U.S. companies evaluate potential business partners. The report includes factual data as well as the embassy's evaluation to help U.S. firms assess risk, reliability, and capability. The ICP analyzes the overall strength of the Lebanese company and provides useful information collected from our industry contacts, local publications/press, and other sources.

For more information, please go to:

<http://www.buyusa.gov/lebanon/en/internationalcompanyprofile.html>

Upcoming Events:

"Made In America 2011"

"**Made in America 2011**" will be held at the Beirut International Exhibition & Leisure Center (BIEL) in Lebanon in March 2011. This event will be a showcase of the latest American technology and assists American business in taking advantage of the expanding commercial relations between Lebanon and the United States.

The last "**Made in America**" trade fair in October 2008 featured the goods and services of 271 U.S. companies in a wide variety of sectors. Business delegations from Saudi Arabia, the UAE, Kuwait, Egypt and Jordan attended the event. Major U.S. companies participating included Microsoft, Cisco, IBM, Pfizer, Johnson & Johnson, General Electric, FedEx, Western Union, Chrysler, General Motors, Expeditors and 3M.



If you are interested in participating or have questions about "**Made in America**", please send an email to MadeinAmerica@state.gov or visit <http://www.buyusa.gov/lebanon/en/madeinamerica.html>

“Taste of America 2011”



“Taste of America” will take place in May 2011 in Beirut, Lebanon. This event is hosted by the U.S. Embassy’s Commercial Service and aims to spotlight the many American food Products and equipment available in Lebanon as well as ways in which the U.S. is lending its expertise in the areas of food safety and quality assurance.

The first “Taste of America” exhibition took place on March 13-14, 2010 at City Mall. The event showcased the goods and services of over 40 U.S. companies and featured a number of seminars focusing on food safety and quality-assurance.

If you are interested in participating or have questions about “Taste of America”, please send an email to TasteofAmerica@state.gov or visit www.buyusa.gov/Lebanon

For additional information about the U.S. Commercial Service or the events listed above, please visit the U.S. Commercial Services Website at www.buyusa.gov or contact the Commercial Section at:

Naaman Tayyar - Senior Commercial Specialist
Email: Naaman.Tayyar@mail.doc.gov

Maya Barhouche - Commercial Assistant
Email: Maya.Barhouche@mail.doc.gov



Preparing for the Summer Travel Season



It is that time of year again; time to start planning for summer vacations. This is also a good time to make sure that your travel documents are up to date.

Nothing wrecks travel plans faster than getting to the airport and realizing that you or someone in your family has an expired passport.

Don’t waste money on ticket change fees! Before you book your ticket, be sure to check your family’s passport to make sure they will get you through all your future travel plans.

For information on how to renew your passport, please visit our website at <http://lebanon.usembassy.gov>. Passport applications are accepted Mondays, Tuesdays and Thursdays from 8:00 a.m. – 11:00 a.m. **Remember** that it takes approximately 7-10 business days to process a passport application so make sure to give yourself enough time.

Travel Myth Quiz (True or False):

- I can travel to America on an expired passport. **False:** *The airline will check whether you have valid travel documents and if you have an expired passport they will not let you board the plane. Also, if you have to transit through another country and are forced to go through immigration because of a missed flight or mechanical/weather/volcano problems, you may be detained or deported if you do not have a valid travel document.*
- If I forget to renew my passport before my travel date, I can just go to the Embassy and get a passport same day. **False:** *Emergency passports are for just that; emergencies. Simply forgetting to renew your documents before your vacation does not constitute an emergency and you will have to wait the 7-10 business days that it would normally take to process a passport.*
- If my passport is expired I can go to the Embassy and have it extended. **False:** *The Department of State no longer extends passport validity. The only option is to get a new passport.*
- My passport is still valid for several years but I am out of visa pages so I have to apply for a new passport. **False:** *The U.S. Embassy can add up to two additional page inserts into a U.S. passport in good condition. The process is free of charge and only takes one business day to process.*
- If my passport is lost or stolen while I am on vacation, I can go to the nearest Embassy or Consulate for help. **True:** *The Embassy is here to assist American citizens who find themselves in this situation. If your passport is lost or stolen contact the nearest American Embassy or Consulate immediately.*



The [Department of State](#) has recently updated their website to make it more user-friendly and easier to navigate. This website is a great resource for information on everything you could ever need to know about *traveling abroad*, including applying for *passports or visas*, *emergency assistance* and *country specific information*. Please take a minute to visit the new website at <http://www.travel.state.gov>.

The **American Citizen Services Section** has regularly scheduled hours for all services as well as phone call inquiries. Please check the website frequently for the most updated information on hours of operation and holidays.

Walk-In Services:	Monday, Tuesday and Thursday 8:00 – 11:00
Consular Reports of Birth Abroad (CRBA):	Wednesdays 8:00 – 11:00 (By Appointment Only)
Federal Benefit – Check Collection Only:	Tuesdays and Thursdays 2:00 – 4:00
Federal Benefits:	Fridays 8:00 – 11:00 (By Appointment Only)
Phone Call Inquiries:	Monday through Friday 2:00 – 4:00

To make an appointment, please email your request, name and contact information to BeirutACS@state.gov or call Monday through Friday from 2:00 – 4:00 at 04-542600/543600.

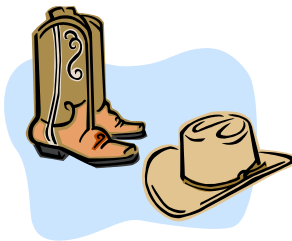
Upcoming Holidays

July 5

Independence Day (A)

A: American Holiday 

L: Lebanese Holiday 



Are you a **country** music fan? If the answer is yes - tune into Radio One (**105.5**) Thursday nights at 10:00 for **“The Wild West”**. The hot new radio show where the Embassy’s own, Jennifer Williams, plays the hottest country music hits and reviews the top 10 country songs on the Billboard charts.

Reminder: Don’t forget to register yourself and your family with the Embassy if you are living in, or planning a trip to Lebanon. You can register at the Embassy Monday, Tuesday or Thursday 8:00 – 11:00, or online via our website at <https://travelregistration.state.gov/ibrs/ui/>. You can also send your registration form via fax to 04-544209.

Honor the Past, Support the Future – Vote!

As mid-term elections approach, the American community in Lebanon will be hosting a series of U.S. voter registration events in Tripoli and Zahle. These events are a great way to get information on how to register and vote while overseas. Trained volunteers will be available at each event to assist with completing applications and ballot request forms for the upcoming elections.



For additional information on voting abroad, please visit the **F**ederal **V**oting **A**ssistance **P**rogram website at <http://www.fvap.gov>.

Here is a list of the upcoming event **locations** and **times**:

Place: *Beit Al-Fann Mina*

Place: *Chateau Liban*

Place: *Monte Albergo Hotel*

City: *Mina near Tripoli*

City: *Kusba, Kourah*

City: *Zahle*

Date: *July 3, 2010*

Date: *July 3, 2010*

Date: *July 31, 2010*

Time: *1100 – 1300*

Time: *1400-1600*

Time: *1100 - 1300*

VOTING NEWS - New U.S. Law Makes Voting Easier for Americans Abroad



This coming November, U.S. voters will elect 39 U.S. Senators and the entire House of Representatives. For overseas voters, the process will be much easier, thanks in large part to a new law - the **M**ilitary and **O**verseas **V**oters **E**mpowerment (**MOVE**) Act - that the U.S. Congress enacted late last year.

To vote absentee, U.S. citizens living outside the United States must be registered to vote, and must request an absentee ballot. You can accomplish both tasks by completing a Federally-issued combination voter registration application and absentee ballot request form known as the Federal Post Card Application, or FPCA. This form, along with key State-by-State instructions, is available on the Federal Voting Assistance

Program website at www.fvap.gov, or from the voting officer at the U.S. Embassy in Beirut.

The new law gives U.S. citizens overseas the ability to request and receive absentee ballots electronically. All voters who want to take advantage of this new option should send in a new FPCA with your email and/or complete fax number clearly written out. U.S. citizens who have changed their names, addresses, or email addresses, or who are infrequent voters, should also submit a new FPCA.

Seventeen year-olds who will be 18 on Election Day (November 2, 2010) can also register now. Some States allow U.S. citizens who have never resided in the United States to vote in their parents' State of voting residence. Check the



www.FVAP.gov website for your State's procedures.

Be sure to follow your State's instructions carefully when

completing the form and sending it to local election officials in the United States. The FVAP website and the Overseas Vote Foundation website, www.ovf.org, have wizards that help you complete and address your FPCA. If you are unsure where you lived in the United States, or where to send your application, the Embassy's voting officer can help you. Write to VoteBeirut@state.gov for assistance.

The new law requires States to send out ballots a minimum of 45 days in advance of Election Day. If you fail to receive your absentee ballot within a reasonable time period, notify your local election officials by phone or email, and ask for a new ballot electronically.

Every voter should be aware that you can use the Federal Write-in Absentee Ballot



(FWAB) as a back-up emergency ballot. Like the FPCA, the FWAB and instructions for its use are available on the www.FVAP.gov website or from the U.S. Consulate.

Vote your ballot and return it promptly to ensure it reaches your local election officials before your State's ballot receipt deadline. If you use the FWAB, and later receive your official ballot, vote and return it immediately. Under the new law, States must put in place a mechanism that allows voters to confirm that the voted ballot has been received by the State. Again, check www.fvap.gov for a link to your State's election information.

Take this opportunity to register with the U.S. Embassy in Beirut. It's easy to do – just go on line to <http://travel.state.gov>. Registered U.S. citizens receive important reminders from the Embassy on safety and security, voting, and other matters of importance to the U.S. citizen community in Lebanon.

Contact Information – American Citizen Services Unit

04-542600/543600 (Ask for American Citizen Services Section)

ACS Section Fax: 04-544209

ACS E-mail: BeirutACS@state.gov

Embassy Website: <http://lebanon.usembassy.gov>

The U.S. Embassy is located in Awkar facing the municipality.

If you would like to receive the newsletter by [email](#), please send a request to BeirutACS@state.gov

Emergency Contact Information

In the event of a genuine emergency, American citizens may phone the Embassy at any time at 961-4-543600 and ask to speak to the American Citizen Services Section (during business hours) or the duty officer (after hours and weekends).

